



Left: Cathy on the cover of *Life*, July 25, 1955. **Below:** TV Radio Mirror Magazine January 1956



The Crosby family: Junie, father Bob, mother June, Cathy and Chris, Bob Jr., and Steve.

Cathy Crosby

Q&A

SAMUEL CLEMENS

Cathy Crosby hails from Hollywood royalty—as the daughter of bandleader-singer Bob Crosby, and the niece of Bing—she was destined for stardom. As a teenager, she began studying music while at the Mon Fertile School for Girls in Switzerland. The following year she was on-stage in *The Tropicana Holiday* (1956) in Las Vegas alongside Jayne Mansfield. She later appeared in films like *Girls Town* (1959) and *College Confidential* (1960), and was a recurring performer on *The Eddie Fisher Show* and *The Bob Crosby Show*. In addition, she was pursued by such men as Dino Castelli, Tommy Sands, Dave Kinder, Claude Jarman, Jr., Bob Evans, Mike Garth, Les Johnson, and Jody McCrea. After marrying oilman Edwin Gilbert, she moved to Houston and raised two daughters. She lives in the mountains of Parker, Colorado, where she is active in politics.

Samuel Clemens: Why did you decide to be an entertainer? Were your parents supportive of this?

Cathy Crosby: I used to sing with my father as a child. We even did a record

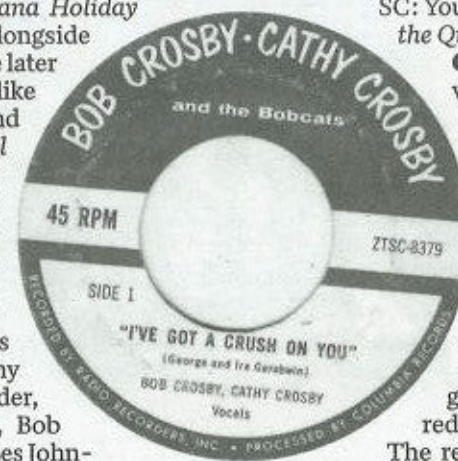
with Columbia. I always enjoyed singing and acting, but I didn't realize that I could actually make a career of it until I saw the positive reception I was getting. Things really took off in 1955 after I was featured in *Life* magazine. My father was supportive, but cautious. He'd seen what Hollywood did to women, and he didn't want me to suffer the same fate.

SC: Your first film was *Night of the Quarter Moon* (1959).

Cathy Crosby: They wanted to give me dialogue, but my acting teacher said that I wasn't ready for that. I listened to him since he was the expert. If I gave a bad performance, it would've stayed with me throughout my career. You don't get an opportunity to redo a first impression. The reviews were good, and I gradually got larger roles in other films.

SC: Your last film was *The Chinese Room* (1968), which was filmed in Mexico. How did that come about?

Cathy Crosby: Albert Zugsmith, who had cast me in *Night of the Quarter Moon* and *The Beat Generation* (1959), called me and offered me a part as a cruise director. I got a couple of thousand dollars and an all-expenses-paid trip to Mexico

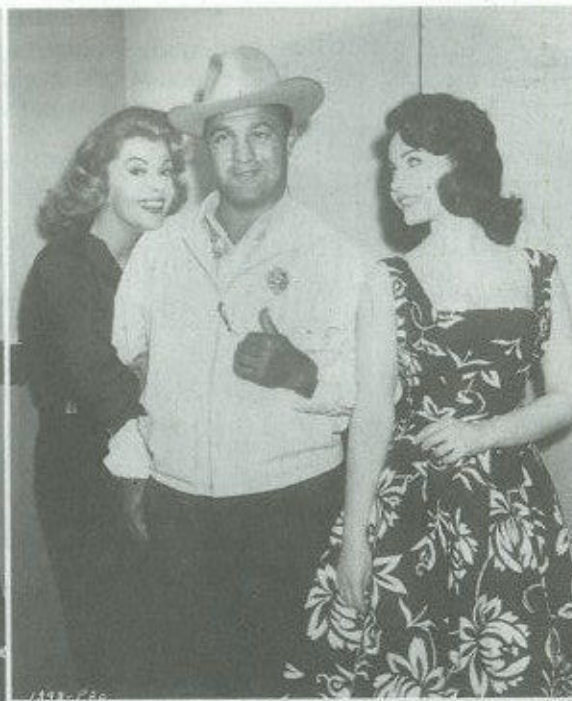
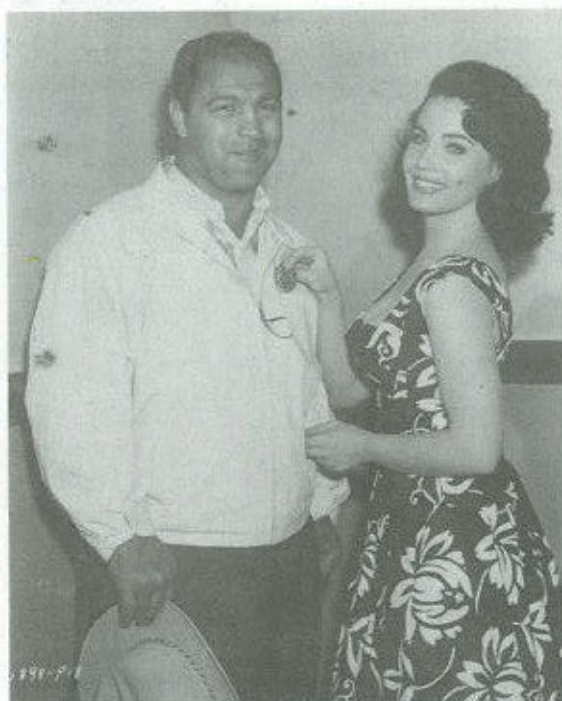


Cathy recorded a song with her father Bob Crosby in 1957.

PICASA

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Rocky Marciano, Cathy Crosby, Jayne Meadows, Mamie Van Doren and Steve Allen in various publicity shots from *College Confidential* (1960).



Cathy Crosby and Nat King Cole.

City. The production itself was an awful experience. I had horrible cramps and had to swim to the hotel from where we were filming. It was all during a hurricane, too. It turned out that the cramps resulted from gallbladder issues. I had to get surgery the following week. That was decades ago and I still haven't seen the film.

SC: Can you tell us about *College Confidential*?

Cathy Crosby: I was at the height of my career when I got that part. There were two other actresses, Bunni Bacon and Barbara Baxter, who almost got the part. We filmed it at Corrigan Ranch. It was essentially a low-budget film with a big-budget advertising campaign.

SC: What was Mamie Van Doren like?

Cathy Crosby: She was gorgeous and

outspoken. I considered myself attractive, but I—and other women on the set—paled into insignificance when Mamie was nearby. It's a shame that her career didn't blossom like it should've. She was amazing. She could act, sing, and had a lot of other talents. I think that anyone who resembled Marilyn Monroe was tossed aside.

SC: You were frequently on *The Eddie Fisher Show*. Anything about Fisher that our readers would find interesting?

Cathy Crosby: I know that he had a reputation for being provocative, but he was always kind to me. He gave me my first dog, which was a poodle.

SC: Do you think that being a Crosby provided an advantage or disadvantage to your career?

Cathy Crosby: It was an advantage

because of recognition. Once you achieve national fame, though, you are held to a higher standard which can be detrimental to your career if you don't perform well.

SC: Was there anything significant that you were offered, but rejected?

Cathy Crosby: When I was a teenager, Howard Hughes offered me a contract with RKO Pictures. He had a lot of women on contract with a starting salary of \$250 a week, but he offered me \$1100. He did this sitting behind a curtain while interviewing me, which I found strange. I turned him down, and he offered more. I decided to ask my father if I should accept his offer. He said, "There's no way you're going to be a part of Howard Hughes' harem"—since he had a reputation for collecting women and not giving them acting parts. There were

other things that I turned down over the years. I was offered a starring role in *Mardi Gras* (1958), which I didn't do because it required a striptease. I was also asked to pose for *Playboy* twice.

SC: You were often compared to Elizabeth Taylor, as both of you shared similar facial features. Did you agree with that assessment?

Cathy Crosby: I always felt that my appearance was similar to that of Joan Collins. I have an interesting story about Joan, actually. I was shopping for a sweater at a store on Rodeo Drive, when I saw Joan looking at some shoes. I approached her and introduced myself, but she brushed me off and walked away. I was offended. I



Cathy with her cousin Gary Crosby, and her father, Bob.



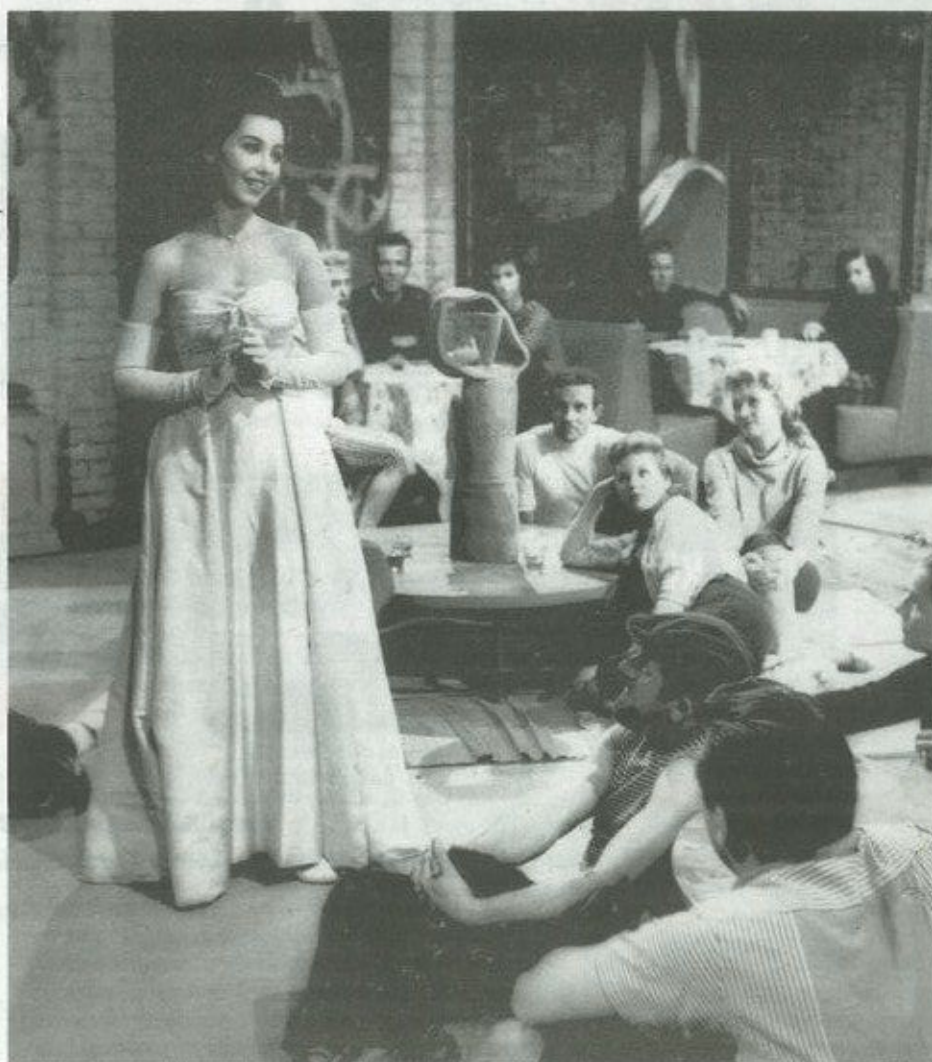
Cathy borrows Conway Twitty's guitar behind the scenes of College Confidential (1960).



Cousins Gary and Cathy Crosby rehearse for the Bob Crosby TV show in 1957.



Cathy and her father Bob.



Cathy Crosby in The Beat Generation (1959).



A publicity photo of Cathy from Night of the Quarter Moon (1959).

Crosby

From 67

think that she felt threatened because we looked alike, and we were both frequently in the tabloids.

SC: How was Bing as an uncle?

Cathy Crosby: He was a good uncle. We would go to his place during the holidays. I was closer with Dixie, though. I loved my aunt. I couldn't wait to unwrap the presents she gave me because she was very thoughtful with her gifts. Bing was a bit distant. He would come downstairs, give his greetings, and walk off to do something else. He tried to help me advance my career, but that ended after I got emancipated. He didn't want to be involved in the feud my father and I were having.

SC: Which of Bing's sons did you get along with the most?

Cathy Crosby: I was close with Philip. He was a good conversationalist, level-headed, and charming. He was the only one of the boys who attended my wedding. When I was single, he set me up on several dates with people. I liked his wife Sandra, too. She was a tough, no-nonsense gal. She wasn't greedy or fame-obsessed, either.

SC: While performing at the Tropicana Hotel, you began dating Dino Castelli. He was a server at a restaurant in his 30s. What attracted you to him, considering he was twice your age?



TV Star Parade 1957

eventually ended the romance when it became clear that my father wouldn't approve of it.

SC: Bob Crosby was a great entertainer. How was he as a father?

Cathy Crosby: He was a wonderful father, and a good mentor. We did have our issues when my career began. He was micromanaging what I was doing, and it was stressful. I eventually left home so I could manage my career without anyone looking over my shoulder. He didn't approve of me performing in Las Vegas, so I had to get

emancipated to do so.

SC: There's been a lot of controversy regarding Bill Cosby, R. Kelly, and Harvey Weinstein and the way they pursued women in Hollywood. Did you experience harassment during your career?

Cathy Crosby: I think it's great that women are able to talk about the hardships they endured. There were men in Hollywood who pursued me, but I was fortunate because of who my uncle was. When you are related to someone as legendary as Bing Crosby, nobody would mess with you because they'd fear backlash. You mentioned that you did an interview with Vikki [Dougan] where she said that Burt Lancaster was violent towards her. I had dinner with Burt once, and he was so kind to me. He was actually a perfect gentleman. That's a benefit of being Bing Crosby's niece.

SC: Would you return to the entertainment industry if the opportunity arose?

Cathy Crosby: I would not. I keep myself occupied with other things, so I don't have a spare moment to think about it.

